

HOUSE No. 1034

By Mrs. Owens-Hicks of Boston, petition of Shirley Owens-Hicks and others for legislation to establish parent participation programs in the public schools of the Commonwealth. Education.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Shirley Owens-Hicks	Bruce E. Tarr
Benjamin Swan	Gloria L. Fox
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In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PARENT PARTICIPATION PLAN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 Parent Participation.
- 2 Each school council shall develop a parent participation plan
- 3 (herein “plan”) in consultation with other parent councils, parent
- 4 advisory committees and other parent organizations. The plan
- 5 shall be directed at eliminating barriers to parent participation and
- 6 creating opportunities for involvement. This plan shall be filed
- 7 with the Department of Education. It shall be written in clearly
- 8 understandable language and distributed in the language of the
- 9 home of each household with a child attending that school.
- 10 A. Information Provided to Parents. Each plan shall contain
- 11 information pertinent to informed participation by parents. At a
- 12 minimum it shall contain:
 - 13 1. A description of the curriculum of the school, the manner in
 - 14 which it was developed and the goals it seeks to accomplish;
 - 15 2. A description of the manner in which the school will address
 - 16 issues of cultural and ethnic diversity through the curriculum and
 - 17 other school activities;

18 3. A description of the school budget, how allocation decisions
19 were made, and the rationale for those decisions;

20 4. A description of how staff are assigned;

21 5. A description of how students are assigned;

22 6. A description of school discipline practices and classroom
23 management. This description shall especially set out alternatives
24 to suspension or expulsion;

25 7. Rates of school dropouts, grade retentions, and suspensions.

26 B. Opportunities for Participation. Each plan shall specifically
27 address the manner in which participation opportunities will be
28 maximized. It shall describe how:

29 1. The school will develop programs including training and
30 direct instruction to help families develop skills to support their
31 children's developmental needs;

32 2. The school will meet the goal of building effective and con-
33 sistent communication between the school and home;

34 3. The school will provide opportunities for families to assist
35 the school in pursuit of the educational objectives;

36 4. The school will provide guidance and assistance to families
37 to provide learning activities in the home that support the work of
38 their children at school, including strategies parents can use to
39 improve academic success;

40 5. The school will create joint decision-making opportunities
41 and participation in the development of school policy;

42 6. The school will create opportunities for parents to raise new
43 issues relevant to the educational needs of students.

44 C. Parent Conferences. Each participation plan shall guarantee
45 an opportunity for a minimum of two individual and confidential
46 parent teacher conferences a year. The purpose of these confer-
47 ences will be to discuss the mutual expectations of the parents and
48 the school concerning the educational progress of the child, to
49 review whether those expectations are being met and to discuss
50 improvements which should be considered and implemented.

51 Nothing in this section shall be construed to mean that parents
52 or the school may not request additional conferences as needed
53 and said conferences shall not be unreasonably denied.

54 D. School Visitation. Notwithstanding any other provision of
55 the participation plan, the school shall guarantee reasonable
56 access to the school for the parent or the parent's designee for the

57 purposes of classroom observation. Nothing in this section shall
58 be construed to deny or limit access to the school for other rea-
59 sons.

60 E. Compliance with Parent Participation Plan. Upon petition of
61 five percent or more of the households in any school, except that
62 for schools of less than 200 students the number shall be 10
63 households, the Department of Education shall hold a hearing if
64 the petition asserts that a) the school has not developed a parent
65 participation plan which meets the minimum requirements of this
66 law or b) the school has failed to implement the provisions of the
67 plan as adopted.

68 If the Department finds that the conditions described in “a” or
69 “b” of this section exist, it shall have the authority to order reme-
70 dial actions to insure compliance.

71 If a school fails to comply with remedial orders of the Depart-
72 ment, the Department may apply such sanctions as it deems
73 appropriate, including a withholding of state funds or some por-
74 tion thereof. Upon compliance, such funds shall be restored.

75 F. Exceptional Parent Participation Plans. The Department of
76 Education may from time to time issue certificates and awards of
77 excellence to schools which have complied with this law and have
78 maximized opportunities for parent participation.

79 G. Additional Provisions. Any school may include in its parent
80 participation plans additional provisions which exceed the min-
81 imum requirements of this law. However, in no event may a
82 school develop plans that result in negative consequences to a stu-
83 dent if parents fail or are unable to pursue the opportunities pro-
84 vided in this law.